



THE
Old *Englishman's*
LETTERS
FOR THE
Poor of OLD ENGLAND.





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FOR THE
Poor of Old England.



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IN WHICH IS PROVED,

That independant of relieving the Poor and middling People of England; it is the true Interest of England as well as Ireland, to allow the free Importation of Tallow; Cattle, and Hides from Ireland; and that nothing will distress the common Enemy more.

By WILLIAM HOMER, K

Blessed is the Man that considereth the Poor, the Lord shall deliver him in the Time of Trouble. Psalm xli. 1.

L O N D O N :

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Old Englishman's
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Poor of Old England.

In Which is proved,

that independent relieving the Poor and
mitigating the Evils of England, it is the true
Interest of England as well as Ireland,
to allow the free Importation of Tobacco,
Cattle, and Hides from Ireland; and that
nothing will thereby be common to any
more.

By WILLIAM HOMER.

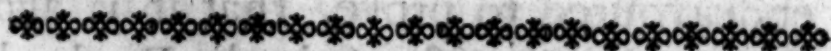
Printed by J. Smith, at the Angel in the Strand, and at the
Printers Office, in Pall Mall.

L O N D O N

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(Price One Shilling)

TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE
Sir CHARLES ASGILL Knt.
LORD MAYOR
OF THE
CITY of LONDON.



My Truly Good Lord;

IF I could pity the Poor in the
Days of my Prosperity, my own
many and great Misfortunes have
long since taught me to feel every
Ca-

ii DEDICATION.

Calamity that affects them, with a Brother's Love; unable to assist them in their present great Distress, arising from the exorbitant high Price of every necessary Article of Life, with my Purse, I have contributed all that is in my Power with my Pen, by endeavouring to point out the Justice and Humanity of passing those good Laws which are now under the Consideration of the Legislature, and I doubt not will pass: At the same time I have endeavoured to prove, that it is also the true Interest of both England and Ireland to allow the free Importation of Tallow, Cattle, and Hides from thence, and that it will greatly distress the common Enemy.

DEDICATION. iii

As it requires a much abler Pen to do Justice to your Lordship's Character, I shall wave the Attempt; were I ever so capable of drawing the amiable Portrait, I should but offend that Modesty which is inseparable from true Virtue, that kind Condescension with which your Lordship has always treated me in my present low Estate, and that tender Regard for the Poor which induced your Lordship so readily to permit your respectable Name to be prefix'd to this Work, whose principal Object is their Relief.

That your Lordship may go thro' the High Office your Fellow Citizens have invested you with, with as much Honour as you did the Last,
and

iv DEDICATION.

and long live to enjoy that Affluence
of Fortune which God has blessed
you with, is the sincere Wish of,

My LORD,

Your Lordship's

Much obliged and

Most humble Servant,

William Homer.



THE
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LETTER I.

SIR,

THE Importation of Black Cattle from Ireland to England was always permitted till King Charles the second's Time ; when some selfish Wretches, who had Estates in the grazing Counties of England, found Means to sacrifice the Good of both Kingdoms to their Avarice, by getting a Law passed to prohibit the Importation ; though Ireland suffered at first, yet

B Eng-

England has since severely felt the Effects of such narrow, selfish Politicks, as the Irish, for Want of a Vent for their Black Cattle, turned themselves to the Breeding of Sheep; whose Wool (as they are hindered from exporting it manufactured) is constantly smuggled to our hereditary Enemies the French; who, by the Help of it, are able to undersell us every where, as one pack of Irish Wool will work up with two Packs of French, which would in a great Measure be prevented, were the Importation of Cattle again allowed.

The Mortality among the Cattle has advanced the Price of all Kinds of Meat; and if it had not, I can see neither Justice or Reason, in letting five or six Counties eat up the other 45. Were the Importation of Tallow allowed, it would be a greater Ease to the Poor in general, and to most Manufacturers, upon whom the high Price of Candles bears very hard. At the same time it would save the Public a great Sum, which we now pay our good Ally the Empress of Russia; whom neither the enormous Balance she gets by trading with us, nor our Subsidy, can keep steady to our Interest. The Price of tanned Hides has also, in a few Years

Years, advanced from Eight-pence to Twenty-pence per Pound; and if the Demand for Exportation continues, our own Poor must wear wooden Shoes, or go bare-foot; and therefore the Importation of Raw-hides from Ireland, would be as beneficial to us, as it would be to them.

As I am no Farmer, I cannot pretend to say whether the same Soil that produces Flax, will produce Hemp; but I should think it would, and therefore instead of our being drawn upon (by the Way of Amsterdam) by the Russians, for thousands of Tons of Hemp annually, we might, if we gave the Irish proper Encouragement, have it all from thence; and they in return, would as certainly take the Value from us in other Goods.

As to the absurd Argument that there is Danger in making the Irish rich, it has no Foundation in Reason; there may be Danger in making or keeping them poor, as he that hath nothing to lose will be much readier to join in any Scheme that is offered for a Change, as he may have a greater Chance to better his Condition, than the Man of Property who has none. Were they ever so

rich, whilst we have always an Army there, and by our Power at Sea, can land what Force we please upon them, which Way is it possible for them so much as to attempt to make themselves independant of the Crown of Great-Britain? And as the French King's little Finger would be heavier than the Loins of ours, they know better than to call him into their Assistance; were they to do it, their Parliament would soon be reduced to register his Edicts, their Country depopulated to fill his Armies, and their Wealth drained to pay them. Indeed, the Protestants of Ireland, who are possessed of almost all the Lands of Ireland, that are not in the Possession of the English, are too closely connected to us by Interest, ever to join in any Scheme to our Detriment; they know that no other Power can protect them in the free Exercise of their Religion; that their Liberty, Property and Lives are safe under no other; that if the Catholicks were uppermost, they must all turn, or burn, and may be not (as was the Case in the great Massacre) allowed their Choice: Besides, many of the Nobility, as the Earls of Kildare, Arran, Besborough, Clanrichard, Hillsborough, &c. have married into English Families, and reside as much in England as

in Ireland ; many of them have considerable Estates here, and Seats, not only in the lower House, but the House of Peers also ; great Numbers, as Lord Tyraley, Lord Blakeney, Lord Ligonier, Sir William Rowley, &c. have Commands in our Fleets and Armies ; and there is no English Protestant who has been in Ireland, but will confess, that the Protestant Natives of that Country treat an Englishman with as much Respect and as great Hospitality, as he can possibly have at Home, and that no People are more loyal ; though the Dregs of the Country are a Disgrace to it, it is very unfair to form the Characters of the Nation from thence. An Irish Gentleman is allowed by all that known them, to be a Gentleman indeed.

Your humble Servant,

AN OLD ENGLISHMAN.

L E T.

LETTER II.

S I R,

THOUGH it is no easy Matter to prove that the enhancing the Price of the Necessaries of Life, is no Evil, and consequently stands in no Need of Redress, I expected a Reply from the Engrossers and Fore-stallers, to mine of the 13th of March, but think they might have chosen an abler Hand, than he who has under taken it; whom though I will Answer, it is almost throwing away both Powder and Shot. As he cannot answer me himself, he is for engaging the Legislature on his Side; but unfortunately for his Cause, that august Body have espoused the Cause of the Poor: If he would have done any Thing, he should have proved that the prohibiting the Importation of Cattle from Ireland, has not advanced the Price of all Kinds of Butcher's Meat; but as it is a known Truth, that the Price has not only been doubled, but trebled since that Period, he very wisely lets it alone, and endeavours to prove, that there is no Truth in what either

ther Sir Josiah Child, or Mr. Joshua Gee asserts, that the Irish have encreased their Breed of Sheep ; but supposing they have not, are a Set of Engrossers to be left at Liberty to grind the Faces of the Poor without Mercy? Whilst we have the Remedy in our Hands, is it not prudent, just and humane, in supplying the Poor, of one Part of our Dominions, with the Necessaries of Life from another? Had my Scheme been to have brought Cattle from any other Place, he might have clamoured; but in the present Case, the English will only be supplied by their Fellow-subjects, and in a great measure from their own Estates. If the Mortality amongst the Cattle has ceased, it is a great Mercy ; but as every thing keeps rising in Price, one would think it had broke out afresh ; and therefore, as that Cause has ceased, it can arise from no other than engrossing. As to what he says upon the allowing the Importation of Tallow, it is so well, and so fully answered in Wednesday's Gazetteer, that it is needless for me to reply. As to Leather, there may be some Sorts to be bought at the Prices he mentions ; but Sole Leather, which was the Sort I spoke off, is still at the Price I mentioned ; and there is no Man, who can afford to wear
Shoes

Shoes, but knows that he pays considerably dearer for them.

As he could not contradict what I advanced in Regard to the Character of the Protestant Natives of that Country, and it does not interfere with the Scheme of Engrossing, he endeavours, as though he was on the Back of *Black and all Black*, on the Curragh of Kildare, to out gallop me in their Praise; but he must excuse my believing that he should rejoice to see the Day, when that Barrier, which divides our Trade, might be consistently broken; when at the same time he endeavoured to prevent its being broke, and, as far as I can see, with great Consistency. How he can call an Importation of the Necessaries of Life, a partial one, I cannot conceive: The Partiality would lay in the Refusal to admit them, as the doing it would be attended with many great and good Consequences, and no bad ones; and a little time will shew, whether the Legislature are not of my Opinion. The Spirit of Engrossing is got to a very great Height; the poor Barbers are obliged to pay fifty per Cent. Advance on their Oil; and if I am rightly informed, that indispensable Necessary of Life, Salt, is in a Retail way, advanced

vanced no less than sixteen Pence per Bushel; and happy it is, that the Sun cannot be engrossed, if it could we should be obliged to give a Shilling a Piece for the Sight of it, as it would be as great a Novelty as the Camel or Dromedary.

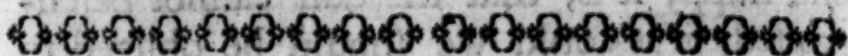
It therefore well becomes the Wisdom and Humanity of the Legislature, to take the Poor under their kind Protection, to break the Jaw Bones of the Oppressor, and deliver the Poor out of his Teeth; and as we have a Minister, who to the Eloquence of a Cicero, joins the steady unshaken Virtue of a Cato, we have great Reason to hope, that a little Clamour from a few interested Persons, will not deter him from pursuing Measures that are calculated for the good of both Kingdoms. No Alteration can be made without affecting the Interest of some Individuals; but *Salus Populi suprema Lex*, is ever the fundamental Maxim of all wise and good Magistrates.

Your humble Servant;

AN OLD ENGLISHMAN.

C

L E T



L E T T E R III.

S I R,

HAVING been too busy to read the Papers every Day, that of the 20th past escap'd me till this Morning, or I should have answered my doughty Antagonist before, I am very sorry I have put his Welch Blood up, and that he has no other Resource than scurrillity, as to the Hint of my being an Irishman (tho' it is what I expected) his Goose-Shot, as he Terms it, has flown very wide of the Mark, as my Family have possessed the Estate they now enjoy, in the Heart of England, these 200 Years; and as the Place where One of the Branches reside goes by the Family Name, in all Probability they have been seated there ever since the Conquest: He is as bad a Marksman when he calls me a Tallow-Chandler, had he taken me for a Merchant he had been much nearer the Truth, and indeed I once was a Leather Merchant, tho' not a Leather Engrosser, for
I

I ship'd a Parcel of Leather to the Maderias, to purchase Wine for my own drinking; as to his supposing (because it was four Days before my Answer appeared) that I was four Days in drawing it up, I should think meaner of my own Capacity, than I do of his had I been four Hours, tho' it requires a good deal of Scratching the Head to write in a bad Cause, it requires none in a good One. Were I disposed to dispute in the unfair Way he did in his first Answer, I could fill a Sheet of Paper in Exclaiming against the Indecency, Insolence, &c. of saying that the Importation of Tallow from Ireland will be attended with many Inconveniencies, after one Branch of the Legislature have declared, that it is their Opinion that the Importation of Cattle, Tallow and Hides is (with proper Restriction) necessary; as to his Fears of the Transplanting the Trade for Candles from London to Liverpool and the West, 'tis what the Tallow-Chandlers, who should know their own Interest best, are in no Apprehension about, if they were they would not be for the Importation; as to his denying that Tallow never was engross'd, he must excuse me as I know the Contrary, if a Person's laying out Thousands in Tallow (who was neither Butcher, Tallow-Chandler nor Soap Boiler)

and locking it up 'till it came to his Price is not engrossing, I confess I do not know what is meant by the Word engrossing, perhaps he will give it the soft Name of Laying it by for a Market; indeed upon the Whole he had better have let me alone. In regard to what I advanced upon the Irish's turning to the Breeding of Sheep, upon the Prohibition of the Importation of Black Cattle; in the first Place, he by saying that I asserted that they had neglected their Breed of Cattle, and turned themselves entirely almost (of which I can't make English) to the Breed of Sheep, has put Words into my Mouth I never said, in Order to confute me, which he thinks he has done; however, if he will give himself the Trouble to read the Speech of that True Patriot and Father of the Poor, Mr. Papillon, who was Member for Dover when the Bill for Prohibiting the Importation of Cattle was depending, quoted in the London Chronicle, he will find, that, that truly good Man asserted in the House, that the Breed of Sheep in Ireland was greatly increased, by the Prohibition of Black Cattle, and that tho' perhaps one tenth Part of the People of England might be benefited by the Prohibition, yet the other Nine Parts would be Sufferers; and long Experience have proved him a True Prophet

Prophet. If 40,000 Packs of Irish Yarn have been imported from thence, it shews the Greatness of the Necessity for encouraging the Breed of Black Cattle in that Kingdom ; and tho' no Man living wishes more than I do, that our Poor had the Spinning of it, yet if the Legislature upon mature Deliberation, found that the introducing Raw-Wool would be attended with numberless Frauds, and therefore allowed the Importation of Yarn, as it has prevented the French from working up three Times that Quantity into Cloth, and consequently increased the Demand of that Commodity from England, it was a right measure.; As to Leather, mine of To-Day is a sufficient Answer, and I think the Engrossers of Cattle and Tallow have not been quite so wise in their Generation, as those in Leather, as the Crowding Smithfield Market with Cattle for a few Days, would have lowered the Price of Meat and Tallow, and furnish'd them with the knock-down Argument of the Importation's not being necessary.

He has also taken Advantage of an Error of the Press, to accuse me of not understanding English, tho' every candid Reader knows, that a Man who has no other Interest than
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that of the Publick to serve, has something else to do besides Correcting of the Press, and the leaving out the Word *only*, in mine of To-Day, quite alters the Sense of the Paragraph.

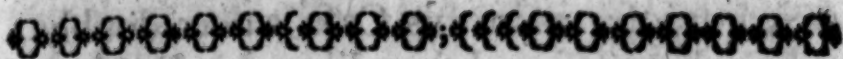
As he will in all Probability in a few Days be answered by a much higher Authority, it is needless for me to say more than, that I am, SIR,

Your humble Servant,

AN OLD ENGLISHMAN,



LET-



L E T T E R IV.

S I R,

IT having been artfully insinuated in Two of the Daily Papers, that as Raw Hides and Calves Skins (tho' the Thistle is mumbled in regard to Leather) are as cheap again as they have been ; and from thence it is intended it should be inferred, that there is no Necessity for the allowing the Importation of them from Ireland ; I have made some Inquiry into the Truth of the Affair, and find, that though Hides and Calves Skins are now cheap, the low Price has not subsisted for more than two or three Months ; that is, since the meeting of the Parliament. We have heard of an artificial high Price being given for Corn, in order to raise the Price of Bread, and grind the Face of the Poor ; and, I doubt not, but the engrossers in the Leather way understand their Business as well as they, and have it as much in

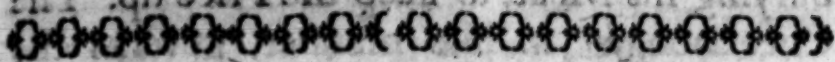
in their Power (to use their own Phrase) *to throw down the Market*, when it suits their Purpose, as in this Case it does doubly; and an Engrosser always likes his Knife the better for having two Edges, and his Bread for being buttered on both Sides; and he can with as little Remorse eat up half a Score Butchers for Breakfast, as the like Number of Shoemakers, or the Poor that wear them, for Supper; and should the Bill for allowing the Importation be defeated by this Artifice, we shall, after they have bought up all they can, soon hear of another Price, which we shall be told, is occasioned by the great Demand, though it will have no other Foundation than their keeping their Orders back till all is over. As to the Argument, that the Importation of Cattle, Tallow, and Hides, will not only disable the Grazier from paying his Rent, but ruin his Family, it is a known Truth, that they lived as comfortable when Mutton was at two Pence halfpenny per Pound, as the Farmer did, when Corn was at 3s. or 3s. 6d. the Bushel; and, indeed, in general, neither Farmer, nor Grazier, are much benefitted by a Rise, as the Engrossers know their Trade too well to raise the Price before they have bought most of them out. The relieving

lieving the Distresses of the Poor (and by the way, the middling People are not a little pinched by the high Price of the Necessaries of Life) is well worthy the Attention of the Legislature; but there is another cogent Reason for their allowing the Importation of the above Articles from Ireland; that is, if we do not take them from them ourselves, our hereditary Enemies, the French, (by the Help of neutral Bottoms) will; and I have heard it asserted by People of very good understanding, that they can neither victual a Fleet, nor their Settlements in the West-Indies subsist, without the Irish Provisions; and I know no method so effectual to prevent them from having them, and consequently wounding their Power in the Vital Part, as bringing them over here.

Engrossing is almost coæval with Trade; it was much practised in Solomon's Time, or he would not have said such severe Things of it; as, *he that withholdeth the Corn, the People shall curse him, &c.* Another of the sacred Writers calls an Engrosser a Man of Blood and a Murderer; and Isaiah reproaches the Engrossers of his Days, with eating the People up as it were Bread; but it never was reduced so much to a System

as now. Till there was an Act passed to oblige them to unload Turbot and Lobsters within a limited time, they were engrossed, and though there was a Vessel with 70 or 80 Ton of Lobsters at Anchor in the Hope, the London Market was fed with but 1000 or 1500 each Market Day. Milk has been attempted to be engrossed; and that necessary Article of Life, Butter, was once engrossed in such a Manner by one Man, and 30,000 l. did it, that no one else could supply the Government; and had they not found means to supply the Navy with Irish Butter, he must have had his own Price; as it was, the Loss of that Demand laid him at the Publick's Mercy, and his Teeth were so effectually filed, that he never lived to attempt the grinding the Poor again. The Poor in the best of times fare hard enough, and therefore every Attempt to oppress them ought to be crushed; and though for Want of Education they cannot express their Grievances with that Propriety which is necessary, neither are they able to see Counsel who can; yet in me they shall ever find a free and ready Advocate. God forbid! that I should (whilst I have Ability) forbear to plead their Cause against the Oppressor, and him who is too mighty for them, I am yours &c.

AN OLD ENGLISHMAN.



LETTER V.

S I R,

THAT great Help to the Poor, Potatoes, having been this Winter double the Price they used to be, I was at a Loss to account for it, till falling in Company with a Gentleman who comes out of Kent, he told me he knew a Man in that County who had cleared a Thousand Pounds by Potatoes, and therefore the high Price could not proceed from any Scarcity (and indeed I never heard of the Crop of Potatoes failing) but from the Growers of Potatoes governing the Price of them by the Price of Bread, as the Butchers do the Price of Meat, by the Quantity and Price of Fish at Billings-Gate; for it is not above a Summer or two ago, since I saw a Butcher in Leaden-hall Market pull up his Breeches, and after stroaking

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(20)

ing his fat Belly, piously thanked God that there was no Mackarel at the Gate, as of course he would be under no Necessity of burying his Meat, to keep the Price up. The Cheesmonger, in like manner, governs the Price of Butter and Cheese by the Price of Meat ; and somebody, who wants to be either a Member or an Alderman, has engrossed the Butter, which is now two Pence a Pound dearer than usual, as Cheese is a Penny, if not three Halfpence.

My Barber, who is a Man of Veracity as well as sense, assured me, that when Bread was at the late high Price (which, had not the Parliament, upon whom may the Blessings of the Poor ever attend, taken it into their Consideration would have continued to the next Harvest) it cost him (as he is ten in Family) seven Shillings per Week extraordinary. That the Reader may judge how the middling People of London are affected by the high Price of the Necessaries of Life, I have drawn up the following Estimate of the extraordinary Expences of a Barber who is ten in Family, viz.

	l.	s.	d.
For Bread, at 7s. a Week, is per			
Annum, ————	18	5	9

For 36 lb. of Meat, at 3 Half			
pence per lb. is 4s. 6d. per week	11	14	0
Six C. weight of Hair Powder at			
10s. per advance. — —	3	0	0
Four lb. of Candles per week, at			
3 Halfpence per lb. — —	1	6	0
Oil and Soap, at least — —	1	0	0
Butter, Cheese, Salt, &c. — —	3	0	0
	38	5	0

Tho' Coals are not engrossed, yet			
the War has advanced them 10s.			
per Chaldron; so allowing five			
Chaldron — — — —	2	10	0
	40	15	0

The Number of Houses in London, Westminster and Southwark, are computed to be 130,000; now if we allow 70,000 of them to be inhabited by the Poor, out of whom (as there is no getting Blood out of a Post) there could be no more than 8l. per Annum squeezed, there will remain 60,000, who one with another are ten in Family, and consequently, if the Price of Bread had continued, must have paid 35l. per Annum each, and the Account would have stood as follows, viz.

60,000

60,000 Houses at 35l. per an.	£. 2,100,000
70,000 Houses at 8l. per an.	560,000
	2,660,000

Two Millions six Hundred and sixty Thousand Pounds to be divided amongst the Engrossers ; but as it is too much for one Years Profit, I hope the Legislature will tax the Bill, and take off a Cypher or two, for the Benefit of the middling People, as well as the Poor. It gives me great Pleasure to see the Corporations of Norwich, Canterbury, Liverpool, Nottingham, Barnstable and Tiverton, petition for a free Importation ; but am sorry that London hath not had the Honour of taking the Lead, which can proceed from no other Cause but what the Prophet observes, *That those who rest upon their Beds of Ivory, are but lightly affected with the Afflictions of Joseph.*

We imitate the French in their Follies, and I should be glad if we did it in our prudent Care of the Poor. I am informed by a Person that has carried Corn thither, that their Government, when a Vessel with Corn arrives, order the Bell-men to give Publick Notice of it, and no one Person is (under a severe

vere Penalty) allowed to purchase more than his Family can consume ; and the Master of the Vessel is obliged if the Poor have not Money enough to buy a Bushel, to open his Hatches to supply them with half a Bushel at a Time. Had we a Law of that Kind in Force here, adieu to Engrossing. I am, Sir,

Your humble Servant,

AN OLD ENGLISHMAN.

LETTER VI.

S I R,

IN a former Letter I took Notice of the prudent Management of the French in Regard to Corn in times of Scarcity. To-day I have been convinced of the Necessity of following their Example, by a Friend of mine (who has given me leave to make use of his Name if called upon) assuring me that he was at Salisbury on Saturday the 4th of March last, which is the Market Day, where he saw, in an Inn Yard, twenty-five Sacks of Corn, by way of Samples ; and that whilst he was there a poor Woman came to buy

buy a Bushel. Upon which the Seller d——d her for a B——h, and told her he would not sell less than a Load, and if he could help it never would. Upon which the poor Creature went away, and with great Discontent, said, she must try elsewhere, tho' she did not know where to go; and in all Probability was compelled to buy Flour at the Miller's Price.

Though we have not only a great but double Crop of Grass last Year, Hay, which used to be from 28s. to 36s. the Load, is now 3l. per Load; and no wonder, if what I am told is true, that the grand Market is under the Direction of one Man.

The City of Coventry has lately petitioned for a free Importation, and if the City of London does not (which I hope it will) I hope the poor starving Manufacturers of Spital-fields will regard their own Interest better than to omit it.

Those ravenous Wolves, the Engrossers, are come down upon us in such Numbers, and in such various Shapes, that if some Method is not taken to prevent them, they will not only devour the Poor, but the middling People also.

I am, &c.

AN OLD ENGLISHMAN,

LETTER VII.

S I R,

THOUGH the Poor of Old England are not yet reduced to eat Grass and Hay, as Nebuchadnezzar did; yet a little Examination into the Uses of Hay, will prove that it is almost as much a necessary of Life as Bread. 'Tis true, that a Coach and Horses are not absolutely necessary for a Gentleman; as the Behaviour of the Man is what in reality constitutes the Character; and that there are great Number of Saddle Horses kept in this Town for Pleasure; yet to any Man who knows any thing of the Manner in which Trade is now carrying on, it is self-evident that, to a great Number of Trademen, an Horse is as absolutely necessary as a Shop or Warehouse. There are also 800 Hackney Coachmen, (who though they keep their Coaches) are very far from being rich. There are also 420 free Carmen;
E amongst

amongst whom there are many poor Widows ; and there are an innumerable Number of Higlers, &c. who cannot carry on their Business without Horses. Now to all these honest industrious poor People, the raising the Price of Hay is equally oppressive with the raising the Price of Bread : And as there is not one Cow-keeper in ten who makes Hay enough to fodder his Cattle all the Winter, their Noses also are held down to the Engrossers Grindstone.

The engrossing of Hay is far from being a new thing. I can remember, that near forty Years ago it bore such a Price in London, that the Hampshire Farmers (though at towards 20s. per Load Expence) found their Account in sending it twenty computed Miles by Land Carriage to Chertsey, and from thence by Water to London : And I very much question, as Wednesbury Coals were lately sold at 4l. per Load at Worcester, whether it would not be worth the while of the Farmers of the hither Parts of Buckingham and Northamptonshires to bring up a Load of Hay and carry down a Load of Coals ; and were the People in the Out Ports to press Hay into a narrow Compass (and I am told a Truss can be pressed into little more

more than a Foot Square) it might answer to bring it up in that manner from any Part of England or Scotland ; and perhaps, as no Engrosser ever thought of getting it prohibited, from Ireland also. If the high Price of Hay continues, the Price of Milk will also be raised upon the Poor.

Though my Writings prove that nobody loves the Poor more than I do; yet I should be guilty of great Injustice if I did not acknowledge that they themselves are not quite free from the Imputation of being Engrossers, though at present there is no Law to punish them for it. 'Tis true they cannot be charged with forestalling ; but every one who has had as much Intercourse with them as I have, knows that they and the middling People have engrossed much more than their Share of that very scarce and valuable Commodity *Honesty* ; but as it is what other Engrossers seldom make Use of, they might have a Patent to engross the whole for aught that they care. The Devil of it is, that the House of Commons, and the new Ministry, have engrossed it also, and that in such a Degree as has not been known for Ages ; I would therefore advise the Engrossers to bestir their Stumps against next

cle, no not even Eggs, which has escaped the Vigilance and Avarice of Engrossers) continues, be doubled upon them, and therefore they can with great Propriety, petition for the free Importation of Cattle.

I am told, and I hope it is true, that the Commissioners of the Victualling Office have, notwithstanding all their cunning, out-witted the Hog-Jobbers ; for if the high Price of Bacon (as the Best is ten Pence per Pound) continues, the Poor must eat their Beans without it ; and Care has been kindly taken that they shall have no Butter ; unless they can bring their Palates to relish Irish Tallow in the Room of it, they must eat them dry ; for Lard must of course be above their Reach.

As the Poor will always prefer to play and starve, rather than to work and starve, the Price of Labour (if the high Price of the Necessaries of Life is suffered to continue) must be doubled ; and if the French, by the cheapness of Labour are enabled to under sell us, in that Sheet-Anchor of our Trade, the Woollen Manufactory, even whilst Labour is at the present Price, what but inevitable Ruin must attend our Trade in every Branch,
if

if the Price of Labour be doubled? I therefore hope that every Man who wishes well to the Prosperity of this Kingdom, will exert himself to the utmost to prevent the impending Calamity, which the Engrossers (if not timely checked) will infallably bring upon us.

Your humble Servant,

AN OLD ENGLISHMAN.

P. S. If (as that true Patriot Mr. Papillion, who was Member for Dover, asserted) it is Trade alone that has advanced the Value and Rent of Lands Tenfold, must not the Landholders (if by overstraining the Bow it is broken, and Trade undone) be involved in one common Ruin with the Rest; and if by being dammed up too high, the Course of the River is forced into another Channel, it will be in vain to endeavour to bring it back. Dagenham-Breach, by being neglected, grew from being but a Yard or two wide, to be wide and deep enough to draw a Ship into its Vortex.

Great Benefit has accrued to the Proprietors of the Funds, by the Law which makes
all

all Contracts for Time void ; and I know nothing, except the free Importation from Ireland, that would contribute so much to the Abolishing those wicked and destructive Practices of forestalling and engrossing, as a Law to make all Contracts for Time, of the Necessaries of Life, void in Law. An Engrosser then could not, as they now do, contract for five, nay perhaps ten Times as much as he is worth ; to be delivered many Months after, and paid for as he takes away ; and by this Means alone he is enabled to feed, not the Poor only, but the whole Bills of Mortality, with a Tea-Spoon, instead of a Table one.

* * * The Poors Rate of the Parish of St. Leonard Shoreditch, is advanced from five Quarters to seven, for which they have no Person to thank but the Engrossers ; and I should not be surpris'd (if engrossing is suffered to go on) to hear of its being advanced to ten Quarters.



L E T.

LETTER IX.

S I R,

THOUGH I am no Soldier, I know too much of Generalship to expend all my Amunition at the first Onset, and therefore have reserved a Charge of Double Round and Partridge for those very good Friends to the Poor, the Engrossers of Leather.

It is almost twenty Years ago since I knew a Set of very eminent Merchants of my Acquaintance, who, finding the London Market for Leather too dear for the Italian, and being unwilling to give up the Trade, freighted a Ship with ten thousand pounds worth of Leather at Petersburgh, and sent it to Leghorn: Now though two thousand pounds might center in England for Freight, Insurance, and Profit; yet there needs no Rhetoric to prove, that ten thousand centered in Russia for the Prime Cost; and as

F they

they found their Account in the Adventure, I know it was repeated. And supposing they were the first Adventurers, yet, as Leather has kept rising at the London Market ever since, it is highly probable that they were followed by other English and Dutch Merchants, and therefore there is no Absurdity in supposing that the Italian Market may be supplied with an hundred thousand Pounds Worth of Russia Leather, instead of so much English, and therefore the Importation of Raw Hides and Calve-Skins from Ireland may save our Merchants the Trouble of the long, dangerous, and expensive Voyage from Petersburg to Leghorn.

As the Soil of Ireland is very rich and fruitful, it may if properly managed, as I hope it will, be more valuable to England than the Mines of Peru are to the Spaniards. Next to the free Importation of Tallow, Cattle, Hides, and Butter from thence, there are three Things that seem absolutely necessary to destroy the pernicious Practice of Engrossing, viz. to prevent the selling of Corn by Sample ; the obliging the Farmer to supply the Poor with small Quantities at the Market Price ; and to make all Contracts for the Necessaries of Life for time,
void

void in Law. For the first and second, a proper Penalty for the Person who sells by Sample, or refuses, when his Corn is in the Market, to supply the Poor with Corn in small Quantities, would be sufficient; and the other would, if put in Execution, be productive of great Advantages to every body but the Engrossers. If there was Plenty, the Public and the Poor would reap the Advantage, and the Farmers and Graziers would, when the Engrossers' Fingers were kept out of the Job, have a better Price. If there was a Scarcity, they, and not the Engrossers, would enjoy the Profit of it, as an Engrosser could not then (as he now does) sit in his Compting-House, and dispatch by the same Post Orders to his Factors in half a dozen Counties, to buy up all before them, and have it executed before it is possible for the Dairy-men in Suffolk to know what has been doing in Yorkshire.

As the Season is very favourable, I hope the Cries of the Poor have entered the Ears of the God of Mercy; that he may make bare his Arm, and make ready his Bow, against those greatest of all Oppressors, the Engrossers, and deliver the Poor out of their

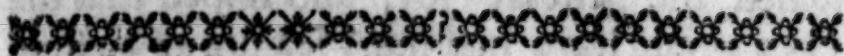
Teeth, by a plentiful Harvest, is the sincere
Prayer of,

Your humble Servant,

AN OLD ENGLISHMAN,

P. S. As I have been the City's Mouth
(as the Recorder told King Charles he was)
as well as the Poor's, I make no doubt, (as
they will not know what to do with the In-
come of the Conduct Mead Estate) but they
will settle the usual Salary, which they al-
ways give their Mouths, upon me. In the
mean time, lest they should defer it till Fe-
lix's more convenient Season, if Dublin,
Corke, &c. in Ireland, or the Corporations
in England, who have petitioned for a free
Importation, have a mind to present me with
their several Freedoms, neatly wrapped up
in an 100 l. Bank Note, I will receive them
with all the Politeness a Man, who has not
been at Court since the Birth of the Marquis
of Carnarvon, is capable of; and I will take
due Care, that my Maid Mary, who upon
that Occasion will officiate as Gentleman
Usher, shall take no Fees.

L E T



L E T T E R X.

S I R,

WHEN I took up my Pen to defend the Cause of the Widow, the Fatherless and him who hath none to help him, against the Engrossers, I thought that three or four Letters would have been sufficient ; but alas! I did not consider how many Heads this Hydra had, nor how soon, when they were cut off, new ones would spring up ; nor how wide the Ruin with which the whole Nation is threatened would spread. Matter of every Man's serious consideration flows upon me so fast, that, like Atlas with the Globe upon his Shoulders, I am forced to bend beneath the Weight. The Engrossers of Corn have again reared their Heads, and opened their relentless Jaws, to devour the

Poor ; and Bread, Sir, Bread is raised upon them again. Upon the prohibiting Distilling of Corn, and allowing the Importation, I joined the general Joy, and hoped that the Poor would have had the Pleasure of blessing their Guardian Angels, the Parliament, whilst they eat it ; but alas ! Forestallers and Engrossers are not so easily managed ; they can out-do the subtle Fox in all his Windings and Doublings ; as they can raise the Price to serve their Purpose, so they can fall it to answer the same Ends ; and the sudden Fall of Bread upon passing the Act, was equally artificial with the pretended Scarcity, and the Offspring of a wicked Design to prevent an Importation, by making the honest, generous, fair Merchant (who with a laudable Intention of supplying the Exigencies of the Poor, and the Public with Corn at a moderate Profit, brought it in) lose by the Adventure. Their Knife, upon this Occasion, had two Edges, and both as sharp as Razors, they have stopt the Importation, and at the same Time, in all Probability, have engrossed a great deal of English Corn, by bubbling the rich Farmer out of it, with the specious Pretence that there would be vast Quantities imported and Corn of course fall down to nothing.

By

By this means they have turned what was before but a Blockade, into a regular Siege, and will have it too much in their Power to create a Famine, where God has made none; for I must hear better Reasons for a Scarcity, than I have yet met with, before I will believe, that a Country, which within these five Years has exported, in two Years Time, between three and four Millions worth of Corn, without any considerable Advance in the Market, should be all at once so exhausted, as not to have enough left for the Subsistence of its Inhabitants. It is pretended that the last Crop was a Crop of Straw, but not of Grain; but I am assured by a Gentleman of credit, that a Relation of his, who is but a middling Farmer, got 500l. by his last Crop of Wheat only. Though the Engrossers have never a Court Card in their Hands but the Knave; yet, as I am fearful that they have got all the Rest of the Trumps, they will be able to play the Game out to their own liking: For the old Proverb, of a burnt Child dreading the Fire, will deter the Merchants from making a second Attempt against a Set of People, who hitherto have been an Over-match not only for the People but the Legislature also. Something
more

more must therefore be done, and as the Parliament is fitting, I hope there will. Perhaps a Bounty on Importation would do, or if, as, thank God! there are many People of great Fortunes in this City, whose Souls are all Benevolence, a Subscription (under the Direction of Gentlemen of Probity) was to be opened, for the carrying on an Importation, though it should be attended with Loss, it might make the Engrossers lower their Crests. I am Sir,

Your humble Servant;

AN OLD ENGLISHMAN

P. S. As the Dutch, and through them the French, can victual their Ships with Irish Beef at seven or eight Shillings per Hundred, whilst our Merchants cannot victual with English under twenty-eight Shillings; supposing by allowing the Importation of live Cattle, whilst Beef in England, is for the Benefit of the Poor, reduced to two-Pence Halfpenny per Pound, it should be raised in Ireland to two-Pence, would not our Merchants victual nearer upon a Par with them? And would not the English Proprietors of Lands in Ireland, and those Irish Noblemen
and

and Gentlemen who reside here, be greatly benefited by the Advance of the Price and Rent of their Lands; and of course a great Part of the additional Profit arising from the Advance of Provisions sent to Foreigners, center in England?

* * * A Gentleman, whose Veracity I can depend on, assures me, that he was this Day told, by a Miller of reputation, who lives within five Miles of London, that there is now more Flour in Town than ever was known.

LETTER XI.

S I R,

MORE Matter, Sir, more melancholy Matter to employ the Pen of the Old Englishman, springs up. The Engrossers of Cattle unwilling to be out done by their Brethren in other Branches, in fleecing the Poor and middling People of this City, notwithstanding that twelve Oxen were lately sold by a Lincolnshire Grazier for the enormous Sum of three Hundred and two Pounds and twenty Lambs have been sold for twenty Pounds, they are not content with the present Price of Meat, and are raising every
G Kind

Kind of it they can. Most of our old Proverbs have their Foundation in Experience and Truth ; and there is one, which I hope, upon this Occasion will be verified, viz. The more Mischief the more Sport ; and therefore they shall have my Consent to advance the Price of Meat a Farthing per Pound every Day till the third Reading of the Bill, as it will do the Poor more Service, than if they employed twenty Counsel in their Behalf. So far am I therefore from grudging the Price I now pay, that I would with greater Pleasure than ever I did any thing in my Life, give a Shilling per Pound for Beef the Day before the third Reading of the Cattle Bill, as I then would appear at the Bar of the House as Attorney-General for the Poor. And I own the raising of the Price of Meat is with me a good Omen ; it looks as if the Engrossers have tried their Strength, and despair of Success, and therefore are resolved to make Hay while the Sun shines, and die hard. Indeed a true Leach never leaves off sucking the Blood of the poor Patient whilst he can keep his hold.

Nor can I compare the Case of the Poor at present to any thing else, with so much Propriety, as to Seneca in the Bath, with all his Veins open.

I am very sorry that whilst we have so many capable Men in this Town, no one else takes up his Pen in the Behalf of the Poor ; and that I must, as Elijah did, when he pleaded the Cause of God against Baal, stand forth in the Cause of the Poor alone.

Your humble Servant,

AN OLD ENGLISHMAN.

LETTER XII.

S I R,

THE old Spanish Proverb says, that no Enemy is a little one ; I shall therefore make bold to answer a Letter in *Lloyd's Evening Post*, especially as the good Gentleman (who dates it from Norfolk, Hampton, March 23. and signs it W. C.) has very kindly furnished me with stronger Arguments for the free Importation, than any I have yet met with. As the Angel Ithuriel has favoured me with the use of the Spear, with which he made the Devil when he was whispering at Eve's Ear in the Shape of a Toad, appear in *propria persona*, if I do not make him, and his Brethren the Engrossers, appear in their proper Colours, I never will write again.

I

I shall quote him fairly, and answer him Paragraph by Paragraph. He begins as follows ; ‘ Meat being scarce and dear in most
 ‘ Places, the chief Topic of Discourse is,
 ‘ about the means to prevent it. I take the
 ‘ Freedom to give my Opinion, both as to
 ‘ the Cause and the Remedy, in hopes it
 ‘ may be a means to satisfy the Minds of
 ‘ the lower Class of People, and cause them
 ‘ to have a frugal Patience under the Scar-
 ‘ city it hath pleased God to send ; (horrid
 ‘ Impiety ! mark how the Crocodile weeps
 ‘ over his Prey !) and at the same time be
 ‘ an useful Hint to the much better Judg-
 ‘ ment of (the House of Commons I suppose)
 ‘ my Superiors. I shall fix my Position
 ‘ (very honestly !) according to the old
 ‘ Proverb, *Up Corn, up Horn*. Our Flesh
 ‘ Meats arise from the three following ; Beef
 ‘ and Veal from the neat Beast ; Mutton
 ‘ and Lamb from the Sheep ; Bacon, Pork,
 ‘ and Pigs, from the Swine ; and when any
 ‘ of the three fails in producing its Propor-
 ‘ tion, the others will naturally rise in Price.
 ‘ That we have a sufficient Quantity of Cat-
 ‘ tle in England is plain.”

Very good, Sir ; I readily allow it, and
 my Answer shall be pithy and short. If we
 have Cattle enough, why are the Poor of
 the

the whole Kingdom obliged to pay fifty per Cent. more for Meat? Can you assign any other Cause but Engrossing? And can there be any better Way to destroy that wicked Practice, than to allow a free Importation?

In the next Place, he bestows near twenty Lines to point out the many dreadful Consequences that would have ensued, had the last Winter been a hard one. To which I reply, that blessed be God for it, the last Winter was not a hard one.

In the next Place, (to intimidate those true Patriots, who have espoused the Cause of the Poor, from pursuing the glorious Plan they have begun till it is brought to Perfection) he tells us, ' I therefore cannot see
' any Benefit (I hope to God, tho' the Poor
' and the Public will, no Engrosser may)
' it will be to bring the Irish Cattle here,
' which will take nine or twelve Months to
' make them fit to kill, if Land could be
' found to graze them on; this will be the
' Consequence of it, that Gentlemen will
' reduce their Tenants lean Stock one Half,
' without making one Pound of fat Beef
' more." A Touch with my Spear will make
all these dreadful Consequences vanish.

Indeed, good Sir, you had better have stuck to your Norwich Nog, than have
wrote

wrote. A Friend of mine, who is a Gentleman of large Fortune, and Brother to a Nobleman of Distinction in Ireland, assures me, that there is a Law in Ireland, which prohibits the Exportation of lean Cattle from thence ; and therefore, when they come over they must be fat ; that is as fat as they are killed there for Shipping, and this Beef is surely better for the Poor than none ; and I hope there will be Grass enough for them to bait and rest themselves, after the long and dangerous Voyage of 24 Hours.

In the next Place he allows ‘ That the
 ‘ Rot amongst the Sheep—has swept away
 ‘ great Numbers, so that they do not at present
 ‘ produce the Quantity of Meat they
 ‘ should.” A most excellent Argument for the Importation of Cattle ! But here follows a better. He tells us, that in a common Corn Year we produce 800,000 Corn-fed Hogs ; and that it is his humble Opinion ! (and hang me if I disagree with him) that that this last Year, allowing for Difference of Weight, we did not produce above 400,000, *Ergo*, the Importation of a suitable Quantity of Cattle to make good that Deficiency, is absolutely necessary. As my Wife longs for some Irish Pork, I dare say, as the Majority of both Houses are married Men, they will
 have

have too tender a Regard for the fair Sex to baulk her.

After telling us that Meat will not be cheaper till the Distillers are allowed to distill Grain, he has the Impudence to tell us, that if we went to bed by Day-Light, we should have no Occasion to complain of the Price of Candles ! very pretty, indeed ! Will he maintain the Poor Spital Fields Weavers, who, tho' they work many Hours by Candle Light, can only get Bread without Meat. My Maid has a Brother there who tastes Meat but once a Week, and would not always do that if she did not help him.

While his Hand was in, he might have recommended another Saving to the middling People, if not the Poor, by drinking Water and with equal Modesty. I am, Sir,

Your humble Servant.

AN OLD ENGLISHMAN.

P. S. There is a most excellent Letter in the same Paper from South-Wales, which, with great Justice complains of the rich Farmers engrossing the Farms in the whole Neighbourhood (and indeed I knew one in Hampshire, who engrossed Farms to the Tune of a 1000l. per Annum, and starved every Body about him) and " That three
' Ships from Milford Haven, one from Car-
digan

‘digan, and another from Swansey, carried
 ‘600 Passengers to Pensylvania,” to get that
 Bread there they could not eat at Home last
 Year, and that two Ships more have gone on
 the same Errand this.

That the Public may guess at the Con-
 science of a Norfolk Farmer, I had it from
 a Friend of mine who lives there, that his
 Uncle, when Corn was last dear, hoarded
 up so much, and kept it so long, till the
 Difference between the Price he could have
 sold it at, and the Price he did sell at, was
 a Loss to him of no less than 3500l. May
 all Engrossers share the same Fate!

I am well informed, that about a fort-
 night since there were more Corn Vessels
 in the River than ever were known in the
 Memory of Man; and that a Farmer told
 a Person that deals in Horses, that they
 would have their own Prices for Hay and
 Straw. To which the other replied, That
 so they had. ‘Aye, says he, we have got
 ‘you down, and we will keep you down;
 ‘I have an hundred Load of my own Straw,
 ‘and have bought fifty more of my Neigh-
 ‘bours, and will make Dung of half of it,
 ‘rather than not keep up the Price.’ Are
 such Vultures as these to be suffered to prey
 upon the Vitals of the Poor?

If the Truth of this is disputed, I can quote Chapter and Verse for it. If they are allowed to go on, I expect to read, that Farmer Gripe-all has match'd his Grey Mare against his Grace's Dun Colt, to run at New-Market for 500 Guineas.

I am assured by a Person of Distinction, who has a considerable Estate in the Parish of St. John Southwark, that the Poor's Rate of that Parish is advanced from two or three Quarters, to no less than eight. Is not this sufficient matter for a Petition from the Out-Parishes in the Bills of Mortality? And will they not be heard and redressed! The Sheep may be dumb whilst it is sheering; but will it not bleat whilst it is flaying alive? It is supposed that 4000 Families are now supported by private Charity.

F I N I S.

in the Truth of this is disputed, I can
not answer and Verdict. If they are
allowed to go on, I expect to find that Mr.
Gee has matched his Grey Mare
against his Green's Dan Col, to run New-
market for two Guineas.

I am assisted by a Person of Disposition
who has a considerable Estate in the Parish
of St John Southwark, that the Poor's Rate
of that Parish is advanced from two or three
Quarters to no less than eight. Is not this
a sufficient reason for a Person to own the Out-
Parishes in the Bills of Mortality? And will
they not be heard and redressed? The Sheep
may be dumb whilst it is shearing, but will
it not bleat whilst it is being alive? It is
supposed that poor Families are now im-
posed by private Charity.

T I N I S

